

# Senate Appropriations Language

## *Fiscal Year 1990*

### **Farm Safety and Health**

The Committee is concerned that agricultural workers and their families experience a disproportionate share of injuries and diseases associated with numerous chemical, biological, and physical hazards. For example, agricultural workers have the second highest occupational fatality rate. While they constitute only about 4 percent of U.S. workers, they rank third highest in number of work-related traumatic fatalities. There were an estimated 534,000 nonfatal injuries in agriculture annually during 1979 and 1980, and agricultural workers incur 90,000 disabling injuries annually. Of the estimated 1,500 machine-related deaths annually among all occupations, more than one-half involve farm equipment, particularly tractors. Agricultural workers are also more likely to develop serious work-related diseases. In particular, they run a significantly higher risk of dying of certain types of cancer than persons in other occupations. For example, it has been found that farmers are more likely to die of cancer of the hematopoietic system (leukemia, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and multiple myeloma) than any other occupation group. Some studies have also shown elevated mortality rates for lip, prostate, and stomach cancer as well. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture there are 3.1 million farm family members, and 2.7 million hired workers in farming.

The Committee is not satisfied that an adequate national response has been mounted to address this problem and believes that the Centers for Disease Control is in a unique position to lead a comprehensive national effort to prevent injury and disease in agriculture. Accordingly, the Committee has included \$13,250,000 and 25 FTE's for a series of surveillance, research, and intervention initiative that when sustained over a period of time will have a significant and measurable impact on these health effects among rural Americans. The purpose of the recommended surveillance and research efforts is to better assist the CDC and other parties in developing intervention strategies to reduce the unacceptably high injury and disease rates among rural Americans.

Additionally, the Committee has included \$250,000 to fund the Tenth Surgeon General's Conference on Rural Safety and Health to be held in IOWA. The purpose of this conference would be to raise consciousness, build coalitions, disseminate information, and encourage action to prevent injury and disease in rural areas.

Following is a discussion of the several farm safety initiatives recommended for funding by the Committee.

### **Surveillance**

The Committee has included \$4,000,000 for two surveillance initiatives to develop more complete information on agricultural injury and disease problems. The first initiative would be a U.S. farm family health and hazard survey. This survey would be conducted by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health [NIOSH] in cooperation with the National Center for Health Statistics. Second, to support the survey, NIOSH would in

collaboration with State health departments, identify all 30 to 50 rural hospitals to provide ongoing, responsive surveillance of agriculture-related disease and injury problems. NIOSH would support the employment of one nurse at each rural hospital whose duties would include: to visit rural families to promote safety and health; to identify and report agriculture-related disease and injury cases to the State health department/NIOSH; to provide instruction to local high school vocational agricultural classes and health classes; to provide disease and injury prevention information to cases identified and their families, in collaboration with county extension officers and the State health department; to assist the county and State health departments in the collection of other rural health data and in conducting a community evaluation of rural risk factors for the geographical area served by the hospital.

### **Research**

The Committee has included \$4,000,000 for research, \$3,000,000 of which will establish centers for agricultural occupational safety and health at selected universities. More specifically, these centers would (1) develop model programs for the prevention of illness among agricultural workers and their families; (2) develop model educational programs on agricultural safety and health for workers in agriculture (3) evaluate agricultural injury and disease prevention programs implemented by agricultural extension programs, State health departments, Federal agencies, and others; (4) conduct applied research and evaluations of engineering and ergonomic control technology and procedures developed by Federal and private agents; and, (5) provide consultation to researchers, safety and health professionals, agriculture extension programs, and others. The remaining \$1,000,000 is provided for research on lung disease among agricultural workers. Inhalation of organic dusts from plant, soil, and animal sources and from chemical and other substances, result in occupational health risks to agricultural workers. Pulmonary diseases related to agricultural dust exposures include occupational asthma hypersensitivity pneumonitis, organic dust toxic syndrome, bronchial hyper-reactivity, and chronic bronchitis. NIOSH would develop biological or immunochemical assays to reflect exposure to immunologic agents and other causes of pulmonary dysfunction. Medical aspects of this effort would determine the incidence of adverse respiratory effects in this diverse work force.

### **Intervention**

In order to actively promote and implement the research and intervention findings, the Committee directs the establishment of a national agricultural safety and health promotion system. The Committee has added \$3,000,000 for the purpose of establishing this system. To establish this system, CDC would, in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture and the Association of Schools of Public Health, establish agricultural injury and disease prevention promotion programs at each of the land grant universities. The land grant universities would collaborate with the county extension officers of the agricultural extension programs to disseminate information and conduct programs to prevent injury and illness among agricultural workers and their families. The universities would implement programs developed by Federal or State agencies, or the proposed centers for agricultural safety and health, through the county extension officers, to

educate agricultural workers in safety and health, and disseminate prevention information to agricultural workers and their families.

These programs would be established on a cooperative agreement basis, in phases; agreements would be established with 15 land grant universities the first year, 15 additional in the second year, and with the 20 remaining land grant universities in the third year.

The Committee also directs the CDC to devise an early detection strategy to reduce the number of cancer deaths among farmers. The Committee notes that close cooperative efforts with existing rural hospital systems will be needed to identify and treat these cases. Accordingly, the Committee has included \$2,100,000 to fund three demonstration projects to detect cancer occurring in farmers. These projects should be conducted in areas of the upper Midwest where research has identified disproportionately high mortality rates for farmers due to five or more types of cancer. In addition, in order to screen the maximum number of farmers as quickly and cost effectively as possible, the projects should be conducted through existing nonprofit rural hospital networks which have on-site access to both the latest diagnostic equipment and board certified oncologists.

### ***Fiscal Year 1991***

#### **Farm Safety and Health**

The Committee has included an additional \$8,000,000 and 16 FTE's in the occupational safety and health line item to continue the national effort by CDC to improve the safety and health in agriculture. The additional resources will provide a balanced approach to substantially reduce the incidence of fatal and nonfatal traumatic injury, chronic injury, and occupational diseases among the 3.2 million agricultural workers in the United States. In addition to the existing program based on the 1990 appropriation, CDC will expand existing efforts to focus more specifically and effectively on rural workers and their families. Of the increases provided, \$2,500,000 is for surveillance activities (\$1,500,000 for the farm family health and hazard surveillance and \$1,000,000 for nurses in agricultural communities); \$4,500,000 for research (\$1,000,000 for centers for agricultural research, \$1,500,000 for cancer control project for farmers, \$2,000,000 for intramural research on lung, pesticides, and engineering); and \$1,000,000 for intervention (\$1,000,000 for agriculture health promotion systems).

### ***Fiscal Year 1992***

#### **Agricultural Health and Safety**

The Committee has provided an increase of \$3,200,000 and 15 FTE's for a total of \$22,700,000 for farm health and safety. Included in this amount is an additional \$1,200,000 for surveillance and intervention (\$500,000 for the farm family health and hazard survey, which will begin the field portion of the survey in 19, \$500,000 for the Nurses and Rural Communities Program to expand this program to reach additional communities beyond the current 25 nurses in 10 States, and \$200,000 for training of States to code death certificates for the purpose of mortality surveillance for targeting

interventions to appropriate subsets of the agricultural community); an additional \$1,500,000 for research (\$500,000 to develop a greater regional representation and expansion of research centers in agricultural safety and health, and \$1,000,000 to direct intramural research in NIOSH to particular target populations based on the results of the Surgeon General's conference in 1991); and an additional \$500,000 for cancer control projects. Sufficient funding has been provided to complete the third year of the cancer control projects which were initiated in fiscal year 1990. Of the increase provided for cancer control projects, \$350,000 is to expand the anticipated number of cancer screenings and the extent of the provider education and outreach activities concerning under this program in rural lows).

### ***Fiscal Year 1993***

The Committee is opposed to the administration's attempt to eliminate the Farm Safety and Health Program Agriculture workers are at higher risk than other workers for certain types of cancer, musculoskeletal problems, neurotoxic effects, and other disorders. The Farm Safety and Health Program was established to respond o far family and worker needs for research and prevention strategies for injuries and diseases. The recommendation includes \$21,485,000 and 36 FTE's to completely restore this important effort.